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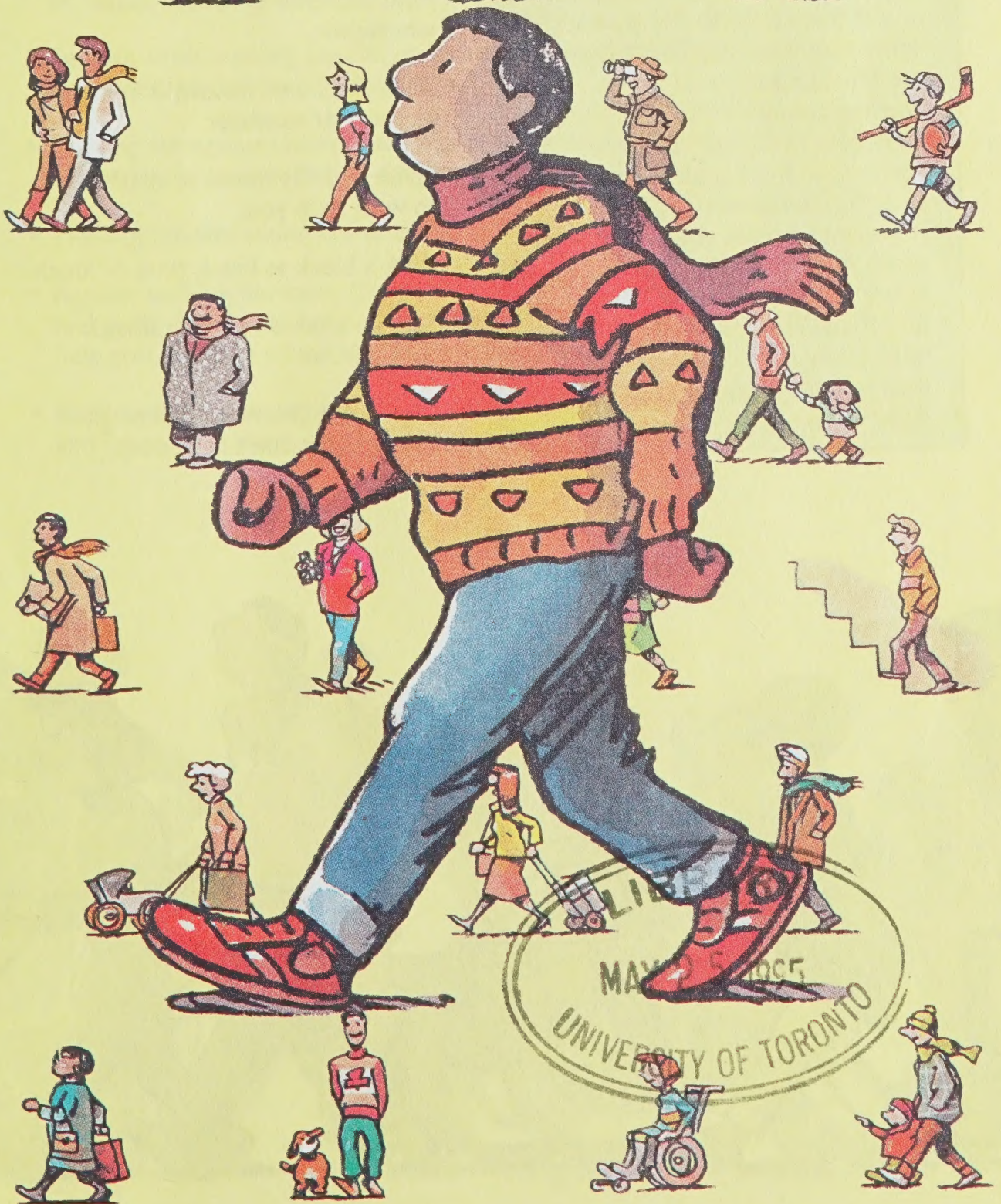


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WALKING

THE ACTIVITY OF A LIFETIME



There are almost as many reasons to walk as there are people who walk. People walk or “wheel” for pleasure; some walk to get fit or stay in shape. Others walk to take a break during a hectic day. Families explore the outdoors by walking together. Some people use walking as therapy for injured muscles or troubled feelings. People walk or wheel to explore, find adventure or get from here to there. And some Canadians walk for companionship and good times. During Canada’s Fitweek, for example, two projects feature walking as their main activity. In 1992, there were 2,000 registered events which attracted more than 200,000 participants, many of them 55 years of age and over. The more you walk or wheel, the more reasons you’ll find to make walking part of your daily routine.

Active Living

The journey to health and fitness begins with active living — moving a little more, a little more often, every day. It’s easy to take the first step:

- Walk part-way or all the way home from work or school.
- Walk to the store or on other errands.
- Push a stroller or wheel your wheelchair.
- Walk the stairs, instead of using an elevator or escalator.
- Invite a family member or friend to walk with you.
- Walk a block at break time or lunch.
- Take an after-dinner stroll with your partner.
- Walk a dog (borrow your neighbour’s if you don’t have one).



Benefits of Walking

Any birdwatcher, stargazer or snowshoe enthusiast knows the inherent pleasures of walking. But walking is more than an enjoyable mode of transportation. It can also improve your fitness, health and mental well-being.

- Walking refreshes the mind, reduces fatigue and increases energy.
- More than half the body's muscles are designed for walking; it is a natural movement that is virtually injury-free.
- Walking provides an enjoyable time for sharing and socializing with friends or family.
- Regular, brisk walking can reduce elevated blood fats or blood pressure and improve digestion and elimination.
- Walking strengthens bones and helps prevent or control osteoporosis (a condition where bones become brittle and fragile).
- Walking relieves stress and tension.
- Regular walking increases the number of calories you expend and helps you feel good about your body. When combined with healthy eating, walking will help you maintain a healthy weight and a positive body image.
- Brisk walking is an aerobic activity. It increases the body's demand for oxygen and trains your heart, lungs and muscles to work more efficiently.



Stepping Out

In planning your walking program consider the following tips:

A little walking every day is far better than an occasional weekend bout of frenzied activity. So aim to make short walks a daily adventure, with extended brisk walks every second day.



Explore a variety of routes and choose ones that are interesting, safe and convenient. Avoid heavy traffic, loose dogs and rough terrain. Remember that hills or stairs will increase the difficulty of your walk.

Walking with others can be more motivating than walking alone. Why not join a walking club (phone your local Y or municipal recreation department to find a group) or ask a neighbour or family member to join you.



Walk safely. Don't wear a Walkman in downtown traffic or in areas where you need to be constantly alert. At night walk with a friend, and wear reflective tape on your clothing. Always carry identification and change for a phone call.

When it is very hot, choose a shaded route and walk a little slower than usual. Drink some cool water before you leave and carry water in a fanny pack if there is no water fountain en route. Avoid the hot noonday sun. Wear a hat and sunscreen.



When it is cold, avoid icy surfaces and walk in places where you are shielded from the wind. Many Canadians prefer to "mall" walk at a local shopping centre on icy days.

Extras: A pedometer, which estimates the distance you travel, can be a good motivator. For extended walks, a light fanny pack or backpack is useful for carrying your wallet, keys, water and a pair of dry socks.



Dress in loose, comfortable clothing made of soft fabrics such as cotton, wool or breathable nylon. In cold weather be aware of the wind-chill factor. Dress in layers so you can peel off or put on according to how warm you feel. Wear mittens and a toque to cover your head and ears.

Getting Started

Warm up and cool down with 5 minutes of medium-paced walking, followed by some stretches for your legs. This will prevent stiffness and increase your flexibility.

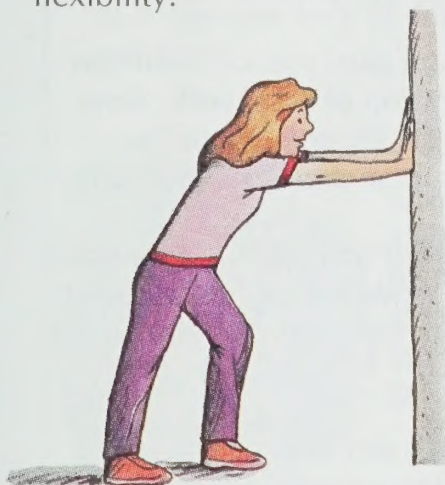


Thigh Stretch

Sitting: Sit on the edge of a sturdy chair. Lower your knee toward the floor and press it back under the chair. Hold the stretch for 15-20 seconds. Repeat each leg 2 times.

Achilles Stretch

Sitting on a chair, plant one heel on the floor and gently lift your toes up and back as far as you can. Hold for a count of 5, then relax. Repeat each foot several times.



Calf Muscles Stretch

Stand facing a wall or other support structure. Position your forward foot approximately 12-16" from the wall. Stretch your arms forward, so that the elbows are straight, lean against the wall. Place your other foot a few inches behind (and to the side of) the front foot and slowly plant it flat on the floor. Lean forward, sharing your body weight through your arms and *front* foot. You should feel a stretch in the calf muscles of your back leg. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Relax back to your starting position and repeat.



Alternate Thigh Muscles Stretch

Standing close to a wall or a chair, place one hand on the wall and with the other hand reach back and hold the same side foot in that hand. When balanced, begin to slowly raise the foot up towards the lower back. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Relax back to your starting position. Repeat 2 more times with alternate legs.

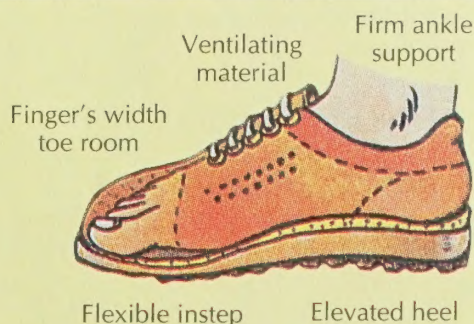


Hamstring Muscles Stretch

Sitting on the floor, put one leg straight out and the other leg bent at the knee with the knee touching or close to the floor. Keeping your back straight, lean forward, sliding your hands down the shin of the straight leg, supporting your weight with your hands until you feel the slight stretch. Hold for 15-30 seconds. Relax back to your starting position. Repeat 2 more times. Alternate legs for best results.

Walking Shoes

When you walk, your feet hit the ground more than 400 times each mile, so comfortable socks and well-designed walking or jogging shoes are a must. Shop for walking shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are larger. Try on both shoes and walk around in the store before buying them.



Ready, Set, Walk!

You can design your own progressive walking program by gradually increasing the frequency, time and distance you walk, or you can use the sample program given here.



- If you decide to try the sample walking or wheeling program, begin by choosing the level that best fits your current experience with physical activity.
- Walk or wheel briskly at a pace you can maintain comfortably for the duration of your walk. Slow down if you are unable to talk and stop if you experience dizziness, pain or shortness of breath.
- Stride your own style — your body will automatically pick the most effective stride for any given speed. Breathe normally and let your arms swing naturally across your body.
- If weight loss is your goal, aim to progress to 45 to 60 minutes of continuous walking or wheeling at a moderate pace, 4 or 5 times each week. Distance and regularity are the keys to burning calories effectively.

Sample Walking and Wheeling Program

Level 1										
This program is for people who are not used to exercise.										
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Minutes walking	10	10	15	18	20	20	25	30	32	35
Walks per week	2	3	3	3	3-4	4	4	4	4	4
Miles/km	Start at Week 1 with about one-half mile or 1 kilometre and work up to about 2 miles or 3.5 km by Week 10.									

Level 2										
This program is for people who exercise regularly.										
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Minutes walking	20	22	25	30	30	35	35	40	42	45
Walks per week	3	3	3	3	4	4	4-5	4-5	4-5	4-5
Miles/km	Start at Week 1 with about 1 mile or 1.5 km and work up to about 3 miles or 4.5 km by Week 10.									

Level 3

If you can easily complete Level 2 there are three ways to further increase the intensity of your walking program.

Speed Walking: Breathe normally and pump your arms vigorously as you speed up your pace. Practise over short distances until you can walk comfortably at a vigorous pace of 4.5 to 5.5 miles or 7 to 9 km per hour.



Climb Walking: Climbing hills or stairs is the most vigorous form of walking. Climbing puts extra strain on the stomach, buttocks, lower back and leg muscles, so add some exercises for these muscles and additional stretches to your warm-up. Increase your hill work gradually.

Water Walking: Walking in thigh-deep or waist-deep water increases the difficulty because you move against the resistance of the water. Water walking is easy on the joints and refreshingly cool in hot weather.



These Feet Were Made for Walking

With its natural pleasures, its range of benefits and its variety of opportunities, walking occupies a special place in the world of active living. According to the 1988 Campbell's Survey on Well-Being in Canada, walking tops the list of most popular activities. Some 15 million Canadians can't be wrong. Walking is a natural and effective way to stay active. And best of all — it feels great!





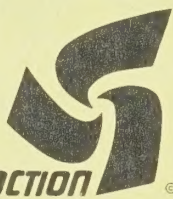
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